THE INDEPENDENTS CATECHISME.

OR

Some Observations gathered out of Doctor BASTVVICKE his Religious and Learned Treatise

ENTITVLED

INDEPENDENCY NOT GODS ORDINANCE.

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For the use of all poor Ignorant, wavering, and seduced *Independents.*

BY JOHN BERNARD Φιλοφρόβυτης.

MAT. 22. 29. *Ye do erre not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.*

1 JOHN 4. 1. *Beleeve not every Spirit but try the Spirits, whether they are of God, because many false Prophets are gone out into the world.*

London, Printed by *John Macock*, 1645.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

TO THE *Wavering* or *Seduced* INDEPENDENT *READER.*

Deare Brother,

THe Learned Doctor hath presented a large Treatise to the view of the world, which proves the Presbyterian Government DEPENDENT to be Gods Ordinance, and not

the Presbyterian Government INDEPENDENT, by strong Arguments drawn from plain texts of Scripture. For three Reasons following I have prevail'd with him that some Observations gathered out of it, and digested into this short Catechisme, might be published for thy good.

First because thou maist be perswaded thereby either not to waver, or to be perfectly reformed from that dangerous errour.

Secondly, because some have objected, The Doctors Treatise is tedious, though every particular in it be absolutely necessary

ceſſary to vindicate Truth from Error, this Epitome may invite thee ſeriouſly and ſpeedily to read it, thou mayſt happily finde much ſatisfaction to thy unſtable minde in it, if with the men of Berea, Act. 17. 7. Thou ſearch the Scriptures. If niceties delight thee I refer thee to the Doctors Treatiſe, which is a garden full of ſuch flowers.

Thirdly, becauſe thy uncharitable Teachers, not able to juſtifie their fond opinion, yet have unworthily vilified the Doctors ſound judgement calling him Apoſtate, foole, that he is crazed in his braine, being

not misled with their New Lights, but hath clearly discovered the mist of Errour wherewith they have blinded thine, and others eyes. Christian charity binds me to give him deserved applause, for his Pious, Learned and Charitable worke; that thou mayst be reformed thereby, is the prayer of him who wisheth thy souls good equally with his own.

John Bernard.

The first part of the Independents Catechisme, upon these 4. Positions.

1. *That there were more particular Assemblies, and Congregations in the Church of* Jerusalem *than one.*

2. *That all those severall Congregations made but one Church.*

3. *That all those severall Congregations were under one Presbytery.*

4. *That the Government of the Church of* Jeruſalem *is to be a pattern of Government to all ſucceeding Ages.*

THE

THE INDEPENDENTS CHATECHISME.

Quest. WHat Government hath Christ Ordained in the Church of *Jerusalem*, and in the rest of the Primitive Churches, to be a patrern unto all Churches for Government, Doctrine, and manners unto the end of the World?

Answ. A Presbyterian Government, that is, by a Common-Councell of Presbyters (as in the Originall) or more plainely of a Religious, grave, solid, learned, and wise Councell of divines and ministers, as was in the Assembly

ſembly, *Act.* 1. 15. unto whom Chriſt had given the power of the keyes, *Mat.* 18. 16. 17. 18. That this was the Government eſtabliſhed in the Church, plainely appeares by theſe texts of Scripture, *Act.* 14. 23. *Act.* 20. 17. 28. *Tit.* 1. 5. 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. *Heb.* 13. 7. 24. 1 *Pet.* 5. 1. 2. 3. *Jam.* 5. 14. *Act.* 15. 6. 22. *Act.* 16. 4. *Act.* 21. 17. The objections made by the Independent Brethren, concerning the qualification of the Presbyters are punctually confuted in the *Dr.* Treatiſe page 19. to the 29. Shewing that there is no expectation of miracles in our times, though the Apoſtles and Primitive Presbyters were extraordinarily gifted for the confirmation of the truth of the Goſpell to all ſucceeding ages: Chriſt himſelfe proclaimes thoſe bleſſed that believe without ſeeing of miracles, *Iohn* 20:29. This qualification in the Apoſtles, and primitive Presbyters is continued unto the end of the World

World in the Presbyters and Miniſters of the Goſpell. Viz. the power of order, and preachings and the power of Juriſdiction, or rulings: Becauſe what ſoever is written, is for our inſtruction.

Quæſt. Were there many congregations, and Aſſemblies in the mother Church of *Ieruſalem*, which in our dialect are called Churches: or did the multitudes of beleevers in *Ieruſalem* make but one congregation, as the Independents ſuppoſe?

Anſw. Theſe plaine texts of Scripture following do clearely prove that the many ten thouſands of believers, converted by *Iohn Baptiſt*, by Chriſt, his Apoſtles, the 70. diſciples and the reſt of the primitive Presbyters, could never meet together in one, 10. or ſcarcely in 100. congregations to partake of all acts of worſhip to ædification, as appeares by the multitude of beleevers mentioned, in *Mat.* 3. 1. 2. 5. 6. *Mat.* 7. 12.

7. 12. Luke 16. 16. Luke 7. 29. Iohn 7. 31. 40. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. Acts 2. from the 37. to the end of the chapter. Acts 4. 4. Act. 5. 14. Act. 6. 1. 2. 3. 7. Act. 21. 20. to suppose these multitudes could meet in one congregation to be edifyed is not agreeable to sense or reason. Because there were above one hundred preachers, and ministers besides the Apostles, and all these continually taken up in praying & preaching unto those many ten thousands of believers distributed into severall congregations, that possibly they might edifie their preachers being all so employed, they could not leave their ministry to serve tables, Acts 6. 2. Therefore of necessity so many ministers must have severall places to preach in, and those multitudes of believers be distributed into several congregations for them to preach to, and severall places to baptize in, other-wise there would have beene great confusion.

For

For but one of them could speake at once to ædification. These plaine testimonyes of Scripture above cited may convince the Independents error.

Because they clearely take away the Foundation of their New-Churches which are built upon this mistake, that there were no more believers in the Church of *Ierusalem* then could meet in one congregation.

Four weake objections to that purpose are punctually confuted by the *Dr.* from *page* 42. unto the 53. *page.*

Quest. Were not all those hundred preachers and the many ten thousands of believers so scattered abroad in the persecution we read of, *Act.* 8. 1. 2. 3. That there was left no more believers in *Ierusalem* then could meet in one congregation?

Answ. By that place is meant all the preachers, and ministers onely, except the Apostles, as it appeares, *Acts* 8. 4. they that were scattered abroad, went

to

to and fro preaching the Word: As for the people, they were many of them caſt into priſon, and it is moſt probable that the reſt were in their owne houſes, there is not any mention made of their being ſcattered abroad; if they had, they had no Call to preach; now the text ſaith they did preach that were ſcattered abroad. But by their abiding in *Ieruſalem* the Apoſtles had both entertainment and ſafety, without them they could not have ſecur'd themſelves from the wolves: And the Apoſtles care was ſuch of feeding the ſheepe of Chriſt, that they continued in *Ieruſalem* to comfort and ſupport the Church; And refreſh the believers in this heat of perſecution: when they wanted the helpe of their faithfull miniſters, and Paſtors.

Queſt. Who Govern'd, ordered, and ruled this Church conſiſting of ſo many congregations and aſſemblies?

Anſw. The Apoſtles and Presbyters (as

(as in the Originall.) *Act.* 7. 19. 29. 30. *Act.* 15. 2. 4. 6. 22. *Act.* 16. 4. 5. *Act.* 21. 17, 18, 25. And howſoever the Apoſtles in the places above ſpecified are differenc'd by that title from the Presbyters, yet in all acts of Government performed by them in the Church of *Ieruſalem*, they were for the ſubſtance of them ordinary acts ſuch as Presbyters dayly perform. And therefore the Apoſtles are in them to be conſidered as Presbyters who received the power of Juriſdiction or ruling, and acting as Presbyters were in their ordinary employment; Though at other times they uſed Superlative authority as Chriſts extraordinary *Ambaſſadours* 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. Some Impertinent Cavills about the Apoſtles exerciſing the office of Presbyters made by the Independents are clearely taken away by the *Dr.* from *pag.* 84. unto the 94. *p.* And leaſt any ſhould conceit the Apoſtles were not Presbyters, becauſe in

in those places above it is said the Apostles and Presbyters making a distinction betwixt them. The Apostle Saint *Peter* resolves the doubt, 1 *Pet.* 5. 1. 2. 3. in which place *Peter* styles himselfe a Presbyter or Elder; In the second Epistle of *John ver.* 1. Saint *John* doth style himself Presbyter, or Elder, saying; *The Presbyter to the Elect Lady.*

Saint *Paul* likewise styles himselfe a Presbyter if you compare 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. with 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. in which places it is evident that Saint *Paul* was one of the Presbytery.

Quest. Why do the Independent Brethren conclude every of their congregations a particular Church, depending upon no other Church; either for Government, Doctrine, or Manners, when the whole current of the Scripture doth so clearly expresse the Presbyterian Government Ordain'd by Christ in the mother Church of *Jerusalem*

salem must be a pattern unto all daughter Churches untill the end of the World.

Now it hath beene plainly proved that the Church of *Ierusalem* consisted of many congregations, which made but one Church, And that one Church distributed into those particular assemblyes, was Governed by a Common-Councell or Presbytery. The example of which Church the Independent Brethren pretend to follow.

Answ. The Brethrens Answer is seconded with these reasons. First, because their particular Churches have for their patterne no lesse then the whole *Colledge* of the Apostles and Presbyters, *Act.* 1. 15. Where they sate in councell to chuse a disciple in the place of *Judas*, the number of the men, not of men and women as in *verse* 14. being one hundred and twenty. The Independent Brethren mistaking the members of the congregation, who

were men, and Brethren, *verse* 16. and not men Brethren and Sisters, do peremptorily conclude from hence, there were no more believers in *Ierusalem*, then in this congregation; notwithstanding the multitudes that believed, and were baptized, by *John Baptist*, and this whole *Colledge* of Apostles and Presbyters before the Passion of Christ. Secondly, Because their Churches (though made up with a number of women) by imitating the Assembly of Apostles and Presbyters, every particular Church doth thereby gaine the same Authority which our *Saviour* gave to the whole *Colledge* of Apostles, *Mat.* 18. 15. 16. 17. 18. which being extraordinary, and exceeding the tenure of the Scripture to have so much power confered upon a smal congregation, doth declare our Brethren the Independents to be wise above that which is written, 1 *Cor.* 4. 6. and in knowledge to resemble the children of this world, *Mat.* 16. 8.

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The second part of the INDEPENDENTS Catechisme, gathered out of the Treatise upon these six following Queres, concerning the gathering of CHURCHES.

1. *Quere.* WHere it is commanded in the word of God that the Ministers of the Gospell shall run about from their owne places, and Charges to gather believing Christians, from amongst believing Christians, it to their owne Independent congregations, and debar them from all Church-fellowship, and communica-

tion with other believers in Gods holy Ordinances and Sacraments. And proclaime, all that are not molded up after this new-modell to be a people out of covenant, to have no right to the seales of the New-covenant; neither they nor their children, though believers, whether this way of gathering Churches was ever heard of before these daies whether this be to set up Christ as King upon his throne, to make divisions and Scismes in Churches and among beleivers and Brethren, and that upon groundlesse pretences.

2. *Quere.* Whether for the making any man or woman a member of the Church, it be necessary to the believeing, and being baptized, that they should walke some dayes, weekes, monthes, or yeares with them that they may have experience of their conversation before they can be admitted, and after that a confession of their faith, should be publikely made before the con-

congregation, and the evidences of their conversion, as the time when, the place where, the occasion how, they were converted: And if any, either men, or women, shall except against their evidence that then they are not to be admitted.

3. *Quere.* Whether for making any man a member or an officer of a Church, the consent of the whole congregation, or the greater part of them besides the Presbyters and Ministers be requisite.

4. *Quere.* Whether for the admission of any one into Church-fellowship and communion a private solemne Covenant be requisite or necessary for the making any one a member, the neglect or refusall of the which makes them incapable of their member-ship or admission.

5. *Quere.* Whether the women and people as well as the Presbyters and Ministers have the power of the Keyes.

And whether the women have all their voices in the Church, both for election and reprobation of members and officers as well as the men, and whether the consent of all the women, or the greatest part of them to be requisite, for the making any one a member or officer? So that if they gainsay it, being the greater number, or allow of it, the most voices carry the businesse.

6. *Quere.* Whether the practice and preaching of all these things, and the gathering of Churches after this manner, be to set up Christ as King upon his throne; and whether Churches and assemblyes thus congregated be the onely true Churches in the which only Christ rules and reigns as King, and all other that are not molded up after this fashion, be no true congregated Churches, and in the which Christ is not set up as King upon his throne?

Quest. Who were commanded by Christ to preach the Gospell, and to propound

propound to all Nations the conditions upon which they were to be admitted into his Church; And who were to admit them?

Answ. The Apostles onely, and Presbyters, and Ministers of the Gospell; As appeares by Christs Commission given unto them and his promise to be with them untill the end of the World: *Mat.* 28.19.20. *Marke* 16.15.16. *Acts* 26.15. to the 20. *vers.* Here the Commission was onely delivered to the Apostles and the Ministers of the Gospell that they should admit whosoever believed and were baptized.

Quest. Did *John Baptist* or any of the primitive Apostles, and Ministers ever call for a congregation to joyne with them in the admitting any member into the Church of Christ, or did they demand such evidences and qualifications as the Independents do in the foregoing *Queres*?

Answ. Their preaching, and practise in Baptizing, which is admitting members into the Church of Christ, doth shew plainely they did it by vertue of their Commission, no mention being made of a new Church, or congregation to have voices with them, or any other conditions to be required, then *Repent, believe, and be baptized*; which is plainely proved: *Mat.* 3.2.6. *Luke* 3.7. *Luke* 7.29. *John* 3.4. *Act.* 2.37. 38.41. *Act.* 8.36.37.38.

Quest. Where did the Apostles and primitive Presbyters delight to gather Churches?

Answ. Amongst the lost sheepe of the house of *Israel*, to bring them into Christs fold; as appeares by Saint *Paul* accompting it a dishonour *to build upon another mans Foundation. Romans* 15.20.

Quest. What command have women in the Church either for preaching, or giving their voices, in the election

ction or reprobation of members or officers?

Answ. No more command have they for any such practise, then by Saint *Pauls* words is due unto them, 1 *Cor.* 14.34.35.36. 1 *Tim.* 2.11.12. in both these places it is the Apostles speciall care to prevent womens intermedlings in matters of the Church, which may for ever silence the Independents weake opinion who tolerate womens voicing it in their Churches contrary to the Word of God.

Quest. May diversities of Religions be tolerated amongst Christians, or were they ever tolerated in the *Old* or *New-Testament*?

Answ. The practise of the holy men of God sheweth they may not, and their practise is for our imitation; 1 *Cor.* 10.6.7. *Rom.* 15.14. *Gen.* 17.1.2.3. *Gen.* 18.17.18.19. *Jos.* 24.14.15.16. In these places it is cleare that *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Iacob*, and *Ioshua* suffered no

Idolatry

Idolatry nor Sects in their families, for this had been to tolerate all Religions, or to worship the true God in a false manner, and not to do Justice and Judgement.

Quest. Are the examples of the Patriarches, Prophets, and Apostles, who tolerated onely the true Religion; or the examples of *Poland*, *Transylvania* and *Holland*, to be followed, who tolerate all Religions?

Answ. Saint *Paul* will decide the controversie sufficiently for us, if we delight not more in novelties then in the old way prescrib'd in the written Word: *Rom.* 12. 1, 2. *Phil.* 3. 17. *Phil.* 4. 8, 9. In which places Saint *Paul* doth declare that we must not fashion our selves according to this World; we must not imitate the Saints of God in their failings, and we must walke so as we have him & the rest of the Saints for an example, *Our blessed Saviour blames the Angell of the Church of Pergamus*

gamus Thyatira, Laodicea, *Revel.* 2.12. 13,14. to the 20. *Revel.* 3.14,15,16. *Because they tolerated Balaam and Iezabell, shewing his great displeasure against them for it*; Now these that labour for a toleration of all Religions must needs be Luke-warme, such as God will spue out of his mouth.

Quest. What examples have we in Scripture for the suppressing of false Teachers, when they are openly discovered?

Answ. The Prophets and Elders of *Israel* in all ages who had the sword of justice in their hands to punish all seducers as appeares, 1 *Kings* 18. 21. *Deutr.* 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *Judges* 6. 30, 31. and their practise is for our Magistrats imitation, 1 *Cor.* 10. 6, 7. *Romans* 15.14.

Quest. What esteeme ought Christians to have of those Independent ministers who instead of preaching the Word of God, in season and out of season,

season to convert soules, preach their owne traditions and inventions, to destroy those precious soules which other Godly Ministers have converted?

Answ. Saint *Pauls* sentence is of any such false teacher, *Let him be accursed, Gal.* 1.8,9. And if we will believe our Saviours words; Such mens condition is very dangerous whatsoever they may promise to themselves, *Mat.* 18.6,7. *Woe be unto that man by whom the offence cometh.* Now such offence is come by wandring after the Independent Ministers New-lights, that all Godly Ministers may with Saint *Paul* wish they were cut off, who trouble the Church, by such groundlesse pretences.

And whereas all Godly Presbyters and Ministers, who preach Christ out of good will, open the eyes of the blind, turne them from darkenesse to light, and from the power of Satan unto God

God, ought highly to be Honour'd for their workes sake; 1 *Thess.* 5.13. *Yea, that they deserve double Honour;* 1 *Tim.* 5.17. Yet the same Apostle doth on the contrary give unto all believers a speciall caution *To beware of false teachers Rom.* 16.17,18. (*Coloss.* 2.8. 2 Epistle of Saint *Iohn* 9,10,7. *verses*) *Concluding that they that are such serve not the Lord Iesus Christ, but their owne bellies, and with faire speech, and flattering, deceive the hearts of the simple.*

FINIS.